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# School Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidelines

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## Introduction

Schools should have cleaning and disinfecting plans that are updated to reflect what is known about COVID-19:

1. **Cleaning** removes germs, dirt, food, body fluids, and other material. Cleaning increases the benefit of sanitizing or disinfecting.
2. **Sanitizing** reduces germs on surfaces to levels that are safe.
3. **Disinfecting** kills germs on surfaces of a clean object. Disinfectants based on hydrogen peroxide or alcohol are safer.
4. **Upgrading or improving ventilation** improves air quality and reduces potential contaminants.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates sanitizer and disinfectant chemicals. If you sanitize or disinfect without cleaning first, it will reduce how well these chemicals work and may leave more germs on the surface.

## Routine Cleaning

1. Who will clean, How often and Where?
  - **Make a plan with staff and teachers.** Increase how often you clean.
  - **Train Staff.** Ensure that cleaning staff, teachers, and others who use cleaners and disinfectants read and understand all instruction labels, understand safe and appropriate use, and have and are using the personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to the product. Consider providing instructional materials and training in other languages.
  - **Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.** Focus cleaning and disinfection on frequently touched objects (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops) and shared items between uses.
2. Cleaning considerations
  - If groups of students are moving from one area to another in shifts, finish cleaning and disinfecting before the new group enters the area. Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces each night after students leave.
  - Use alcohol wipes or 70% isopropyl alcohol to clean keyboards and electronics.
  - If possible, vacuum carpets daily (when children are not present). Use a vacuum with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter – or use HEPA vacuum bags.
  - Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. High-touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings, should be cleaned routinely.
  - Clean and disinfect hands-on materials often and after each use. Limit shared teaching materials to those you can easily clean and sanitize or disinfect. Children's books and other paper-based materials are not high risk for spreading the virus.

## Cleaning when a student/staff develops COVID-19 symptoms while at School

The size of the cleaning area depends on the number of people who become sick and where they and their close contacts spent time. For example, it may only be necessary to clean one part of the building if those who became ill only spent time in that area of the school.

1. Separate the person with COVID-like symptoms away from others and supervise at a distance of 6 feet.
  - Close off areas used by the person with COVID-19 symptoms
  - Open doors and windows to increase air circulation
  - Clean all high touch areas between patient room and bathroom as well as in the bathroom.
  - Thoroughly clean and disinfect the communal bathroom immediately after use.
  - If possible, wait up to 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting
2. Schools may need to implement short term closure if multiple persons develop COVID-19 symptoms while in a school building.

## Resources

We have compiled a list of resources that provide in-depth guidance on cleaning and disinfecting for COVID-19 in schools.

Name of Resource	Developed By
<a href="#">Cleaning for a Healthier Schools – Infection Control Handbook</a>	National Cleaning for Healthier Schools and Infection Control Workgroup
<a href="#">WA DOH Resources and Recommendations for Schools</a>	Washington Department of Health
<a href="#">Cleaning, Disinfection, and Hand Hygiene for Schools</a>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<a href="#">Six Steps to Cleaning and Disinfecting in Schools</a>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<a href="#">Cleaning and Disinfecting in School Classrooms</a>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<a href="#">List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)</a>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<a href="#">Safer cleaning and disinfecting products</a> handout	University of Washington